

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Spring 2004 Released Test

GRADE 8
Writing

LARGE PRINT FORM

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DIRECTIONS

**Read the passage. Read each question after the passage.
Choose the best answer.**

SAMPLE A

A Special Person

In English class, Sarah has been asked to write a description of someone special to her. Sarah wants to write about her older brother.

Which of these would BEST help Sarah write her description of her older brother?

- A Calling his friends and telling them about him**
- B Thinking about all the things she likes about him**
- C Making a list of things she wants him to do for her**
- D Asking him to take her to the library**

SAMPLE B

Here is the first part of Sarah’s rough draft.

(1)A special person in my life is my big brother, his name is Ben. (2)He is tall and thin.

How should sentence 1 be written?

- F A special person in my life is Ben, my big brother.**
- G A special person in my life is Ben, he is my big brother.**
- H In my life a special person is my big brother, his name is Ben.**
- J My big brother Ben, he is a special person in my life.**

SAMPLE C

Here is the next part of Sarah’s rough draft.

(3)He helps me with my homework. (4)He is a good student.

In sentence 3, He helps should be written

- A He were helping**
- B He have helped**
- C He help**
- D as it is**

Astronomy Lesson

Betsy’s English teacher has asked the class to write a personal narrative.

- 1 Betsy doesn’t know what to write about. Which of these would BEST help her?**
- A Brainstorming for ideas**
 - B Reading her best friend’s story**
 - C Going to the library to do research**
 - D Making an outline**

Betsy made these notes. Use them to answer question 2.

- 1. My twin sister Maya got a telescope for her birthday.**
- 2. She liked it so much that she had no time to play basketball with me.**
- 3. In desperation I decided to see what Maya found so exciting about looking at the sky.**
- 4. Maya showed me Saturn, star clusters, and other things through her telescope.**
- 5. In spite of myself, I found it interesting!**

2 Based on Betsy's notes, which of these would be the BEST title for her story?

- F Why I Like Basketball**
- G What It's Like Being a Twin**
- H The Moons of Saturn**
- J Astronomy's Not So Boring After All**

Here is the first part of Betsy’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 3–5.

(1)Shivering in the cool night air, Betsy waited impatiently. (2)She was waiting as her twin sister Maya adjusted the telescope lens. (3)She and Maya usually did everything together and were rarely apart. (4)They were both into basketball and loved to go one-on-one in the driveway of their house. (5)But Maya had gotten the telescope for her birthday two months ago, ever since she wasn’t interested in anything else. (6)All she wanted to do was drag it outside every night. (7)She would spend hours gazing up at the starry sky. (8)Betsy had decided that even though she had no interest in astronomy, she was going to have to learn something about Maya’s new hobby if she ever wanted to spend time with her sister again.

(9)“I’m glad you came out, Betsy,” Maya said. (10)“It’s so fascinating! (11)Just think, the light from those stars is coming to us from thousands of light years away.”

(12)“Whatever,” Betsy murmured. (13)“What’s that big star up there?”

(14)“That’s not a star! (15) That’s Saturn,” Maya explained with exaggerated patience. (16)Maya wants to be a famous movie star when she grows up. (17)She moved away from the telescope. (18)“Here, take a look at it.”

3 How can sentences 1 and 2 BEST be joined?

- A Shivering in the cool night air, Betsy waited impatiently, she was waiting as her twin sister Maya adjusted the telescope lens.**
- B Betsy, shivering in the cool night air, waited impatiently, waiting as her twin sister Maya adjusted the telescope lens.**
- C Waiting impatiently, Betsy shivered in the cool night air, Betsy was waiting as her twin sister Maya adjusted the telescope lens.**
- D Shivering in the cool night air, Betsy waited impatiently as her twin sister Maya adjusted the telescope lens.**

4 How is sentence 5 BEST written?

- F But ever since two months ago Maya had gotten the telescope for her birthday, not interested in anything else.**
- G but Maya had gotten the telescope for her birthday two months ago, she wasn't interested in anything else ever since.**
- H But ever since Maya had gotten the telescope for her birthday two months ago, she wasn't interested in anything else.**
- J But Maya had gotten the telescope ever since her birthday two months ago and wasn't interested in anything else.**

5 Which of these does NOT belong in Betsy's draft?

- A 6**
- B 8**
- C 13**
- D 16**

Read this next section of Betsy’s rough draft and use it to answer questions 6–10. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

(19)Betsy looked through the eyepiece. (20)There, she saw a small, white sphere in the midst of a set of rings against a dark background. (21)It was the amazingest thing Betsy had ever seen.

(22)“Why is it moving?” she asked. (23)“I can hardly keep it in site.”

(24)“That’s because both Saturn and Earth is spinning,” Maya said. (25)“Next we’ll look at the moon. (26)Then I want to show you the Horsehead Nebula.” (27)For the next half hour, Betsy watched with increasing interest as Maya expertly located objects in the sky and then let Betsy examine them through the telescope lens.

(28)“What did you think of your astronomy lesson, Sis?” Maya asked as they lugged the heavy telescope back inside.

(29)“Even though I liked it a lot,” Betsy began, “I hope you and me can still play basketball sometimes.”

(30)“It’s a deal!” Maya answered.

6 In sentence 21, how is the amazingest thing correctly written?

- F the most amazing thing
- G the most amazingest thing
- H the more amazing thing
- J As it is

7 In sentence 23, how is can hardly keep it in site correctly written?

- A can’t hardly keep it in site
- B can’t not hardly keep it in sight
- C can hardly keep it in sight
- D As it is

8 In sentence 24, how is both Saturn and Earth is spinning correctly written?

- F both Saturn and Earth are spinning**
- G both Saturn, and Earth are spinning**
- H both Saturn, and Earth is spinning**
- J As it is**

9 In sentence 27, how is increasing interest correctly written?

- A increasing intrest**
- B increaseing intrest**
- C increaseing interest**
- D As it is**

10 In sentence 29, how is I hope you and me can correctly written?

F I had hoped you and me can

G I hope you and I can

H I hope me and you can

J As it is

Mysterious Mail

Chris’s English teacher has asked the students to write a short story based on a personal experience.

After thinking about his story, Chris made this outline. Use it to answer question 11.

Title: Mysterious Mail

I. Theme

Good things come to those who wait.

II. Setting

My house

III. Characters

Dad

Me

Bob, my friend

11 Which of these would be the MOST helpful for Chris to add to his outline?

- A The names of people who will read his story**
- B The short stories he has read in his English class**
- C The way he came up with the idea for his story**
- D The events that take place in the story**

**Here is Chris’s rough draft of the first part of his story.
Use it to answer questions 12–15.**

**(1)I always thought it would be cool to be a
detective. (2)I finally got my chance. (3)I learned that
solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought. (4)Just
waiting for clues, this is what you have to do sometimes.**

**(5)It all started when I checked the mail one day after
school. (6)Buried among the bills and magazines
addressed to my parents, there was a small white card
included with the other mail. (7)In big letters,
“SOMETHING GOOD is coming soon.” (8)That was all it
said. (9)It had been postmarked in Cheyenne,
Wyoming. (10)I was pretty sure we didn’t know anyone
from there. (11)There was no signature or return address.**

**(12)When I showed the strange card to my friend Bob,
he said, “Maybe someone’s sending you a present.”**

**(13)“No, that couldn’t be it,” I said. (14)“Maybe I won
something! (15)Or maybe it’s just a joke.”**

12 How can Chris BEST combine sentences 2 and 3 without changing their meaning?

F I finally got my chance, I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.

G When I finally got my chance, I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.

H Got my chance finally, and learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.

J I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought and I finally got my chance.

13 How is sentence 4 BEST rewritten?

- A Sometimes you just have to wait for clues.**
- B Sometimes just waiting, this is what you have to do for clues.**
- C Just waiting sometimes for clues, this is what you have to do.**
- D For clues sometimes, you just have to wait for them.**

14 Which of these is NOT a complete sentence?

- F 1**
- G 7**
- H 10**
- J 13**

15 Which of these underlined phrases repeats an idea already expressed in that sentence?

- A I always thought it would be cool to be a detective.**
- B It all started when I checked the mail one day after school.**
- C Buried among the bills and magazines addressed to my parents, there was a small white card included with the other mail.**
- D When I showed the strange card to my friend Bob, he said, “Maybe someone’s sending you a present.”**

Read the next part of Chris’s rough draft and use it to answer questions 16–20. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

(16)Nothing happened for the next few days. (17)Then, on Thursday, I checked the mail again. (18)Sure enough, there was another white card. (19)The card’s message, written in big letters, was “SOMETHING GOOD is on the way.”

(20)By now I was eager to know what the good thing was. (21)But no more cards came.

(22)Then, one morning at breakfast, dad asked, “What do you think of this new cereal? (23)I think it tastes real good.”

(24)I said, “It’s okay, but there’s too much stuff in it. (25)I like the nuts fruit, and cornflakes, but not the oat clusters.”

(26)Dad said, “The company that makes the cereal sent us a free sample package in yesterday’s mail. (27)The name of the cereal is ‘SOMETHING GOOD,’ ” he added.

(28)I couldn't beleive it. (29)All this time, I had been excited about a cereal!

16 In sentence 19, The card's message, written in big letters, is correctly written

- F The card's message written in big letters,
- G The cards' message, written in big letters,
- H The cards's message, written in big letters
- J as it is

17 In sentence 22, at breakfast, dad asked, "What is correctly written

- A at breakfast, Dad asked, "What
- B at breakfast, dad asked, What
- C at breakfast, dad asked, "what
- D as it is

18 In sentence 23, it tastes real good.” is correctly written

F it taste real good.”

G it tastes really good.”

H it tastes really well.”

J as it is

19 In sentence 25, nuts fruit, and cornflakes, is correctly written

A nuts fruit and cornflakes,

B nuts fruit, and cornflakes

C nuts, fruits, and cornflakes,

D as it is

20 In sentence 28, couldn't beleive is correctly written

F couldn't believe

G couldn't believe

H couldn't beleave

J as it is

Theater Intern

Leroy wants to be a stage director someday. He has decided to write a letter to the director of a community theater to ask if he can work there as an intern to learn more about theater.

- 21 Which of these methods would be the MOST helpful to Leroy before he begins to write?**
- A Deciding how many pages his letter will be**
 - B Listing the things he wants to include in his letter**
 - C Signing up for a drama class**
 - D Looking up words in the dictionary that he wants to use in his letter**

Here are two drafts of the first part of Leroy’s letter. Use both rough drafts to answer questions 22–25.

DRAFT A.

1846 E. 4th St.
Sarsatley, VA 25206

Dear Mr. Vasquez:

Recently my eighth-grade drama class saw the play *A New World* performed by your theater company. It was the first live play I’ve seen, other than the ones at school. It was amazing! Would you consider letting me come to your theater to work as an intern three afternoons a week this summer? The actors were great. I especially liked the boy who played Wu Li. He made the audience feel Wu Li’s excitement as his family came to America. He also made us feel his regret at leaving his own country. I also liked Nancy Chang as the grandmother. When we read the play aloud in class, I didn’t realize how funny her role could be.

I also have a request to make, Mr. Vasquez. I am interested in becoming a director someday. This year I assisted my drama teacher, Mrs. Lyons, in putting on our annual school production. However, a school play can't compare with working with a professional theater company like yours. In return for the work I'd do, I'd like to learn about sound effects, lights, and actors.

DRAFT B.

**1846 E. 4th St.
Sarsatley, VA 25206**

Dear Mr. Vasquez:

Recently my eighth-grade drama class saw the play *A New World*. It was very good. The actors were great. I especially liked the boy who played Wu Li and the woman who played the grandmother. I also liked the set. With only some junk, the stage was made to look like a ship in the first act and a busy seaport in the second.

I have a request to make. I am very interested in becoming a director someday. This year I assisted my drama teacher, Mrs. Lyons, with our annual school production. However, my school puts on only one play a year. It can't compare with working with a professional theater company. So, I would like to work at your theater company as an intern three afternoons a week. I could help with odd jobs like painting sets and ironing costumes. I'd also like to learn about working with sound effects, lights, and actors.

22 Which draft is better organized?

- F Draft A, because the tone is more conversational**
- G Draft B, because all of the ideas are in an appropriate sequence**
- H Draft A, because it contains more information about the play's characters**
- J Draft B, because the language is more vivid and specific**

23 In either draft, which of these sentences could Leroy add at the end of paragraph 1?

- A I enjoy movies too.**
- B A few people in my class didn't like the play.**
- C I plan to be in the drama club next year.**
- D Thanks for an enjoyable afternoon of theater.**

24 In both drafts, what is Leroy’s main purpose in paragraph 1?

F To discuss his eighth-grade class

G To make his letter longer

H To express how much he liked the play

J To describe his theater training

25 In Draft B, what is a more descriptive way for Leroy to write some junk?

A some stuff

B a few boxes, barrels, and ropes

C some junky things

D a few old things that were collected

Read the next part of Leroy’s rough draft and answer questions 26–30. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

I already have some theater experience from working on the production of *The Story of The Decade*. My dutys included choosing the cast and reminding people of their lines during rehearsals. This teach me that putting on a play isn’t all glamour, as some people might think. In fact, it’s a lot of hard work. In my opinion, though, seeing the curtain rise on opening night makes it all worthwhile.

I am sending along a letter of recommendation from Mrs. Lyons. She was nice enough to write, “Leroy is young, but he’s responsible, hardworking, and eager to learn.”

Hiring me as an intern has another benefit too. It showed the community that you are committed to helping young people pursue their dreams.

I can be reached at 555-2702. I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully yours,



Leroy Jacobs

26 How is *The Story of The Decade* correctly written?

- F *The Story of the decade*
- G *The story of the decade*
- H *The Story of the Decade*
- J As it is

27 How is dutys included choosing correctly written?

- A dutys included chosing**
- B duties included chosing**
- C duties included choosing**
- D As it is**

28 How is This teach me correctly written?

- F This teached me**
- G This will teach me**
- H This taught me**
- J As it is**

29 How is It showed the community that you are committed correctly written?

- A It is showing the community that you are committed**
- B It would show the community that you are committed**
- C It has shown the community that you are committed**
- D As it is**

30 How is pursue their dreams correctly written?

- F pursue thier dreams**
- G pursue there dreams**
- H pursue they're dreams**
- J As it is**

Answer Key

Test Sequence Number	Correct Answer
1	A
2	J
3	D
4	H
5	D
6	F
7	C
8	F
9	D
10	G
11	D
12	G
13	A
14	G
15	C
16	J
17	A
18	G
19	C
20	G
21	D
22	G
23	D
24	H
25	B
26	H
27	C
28	H
29	B
30	J